

Mr Chairman and members of the General Law Committee, thank you for holding this public hearing today. My name is Chris Sullivan, I live in Branford and I am a columnist covering the Connecticut craft brewing industry for Ale Street News. I am attending this hearing to speak in favor of SB 464 "An Act Establishing a Connecticut Beer Trail".

The State of Connecticut contains five production breweries and eleven brewpubs. These craft brewing establishments are spread around the State in various municipalities. I would like to highlight a few of these: Cambridge Brew House in Granby, Thomas Hooker Brewing in Bloomfield, Southport Brewing Company in Branford, and City Steam Brewery and Café and Hartford. I believe these establishments exist within the districts of members of this committee. There are several other brewing establishments in CT and I have included a table detailing the complete list in my submitted written comments.

Each of these brewing establishments is a local business, creating a Connecticut made product and providing jobs to Connecticut residents. In fact, the beer industry as a whole provided over 18000 jobs in Connecticut last year, this total includes all package stores and distributors. The jobs at breweries and brewpubs are a smaller subset of the total list of jobs provided. Each brewing entity must purchase and update annual manufacturing permits from the State and is also taxed on a per barrel of production basis. These revenue streams offer income to State budgets at a time when revenue can be tough to come by in Connecticut.

I believe the creation of a CT Beer Trail will give an extra boost to the brewing industry in Connecticut and will encourage others from outside the state to visit and spend money within our borders. Every year the City of Denver Colorado hosts the Great American Beer Festival and in 2005 over 28,000 people traveled to the city specifically for this event. Smaller gatherings are found at craft breweries across the country, especially at release events for specialty beers. I attended one of these events at New England Brewing in Woodbridge where scores of people were waiting in line outside the brewery to purchase a couple bottles of a one-time special release beer. Breweries in other States such as Portsmouth Brewing in New Hampshire actually must distribute pre-sale tickets to assure that attendees actually can get the beers they have come to obtain at release events.

The craft brewing industry is a growing one, with 2010 growth of 9% by volume and 12% in retail dollars. I think most industries would be happy to have ½ of those numbers. This is an industry that can and should expand within Connecticut. Creating a Beer Trail will provide that support to new and existing brewing entities. There are currently 3-4 new production facilities at various stages of planning in Connecticut.

Many other States have created beer trails to promote their craft brewing industry. Each of these states has a web presence with routed maps and directions to each brewery and often features a checklist for participants to mark off completed visits. I've included web links to the beer trail info for Maine, Vermont and New York all states in our region. With this much support in other states, Connecticut's breweries are actually at a marketing disadvantage to their regional neighbors.

Creation of a CT Beer Trail would require some printing costs for brochures to distribute at rest areas and other tourism locations, creation of a web presence, and some additional signage to direct travelers towards these brewing entities. Additional costs could be a t-shirt or pint glass or other

item that would further promote the Connecticut Brewing Industry. With the incomes and jobs generated by each of the breweries and any future additions, these minimal costs seem well worth the investment in support of local businesses.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to speak on this important issue.

Attachments

Established brewing entities in Connecticut

Brewery or Brewpub	Municipality
Willimantic Brewing Company	Willimantic
Bru Rm @ BAR	New Haven
John Harvard's Brewhouse	Manchester
New England Brewing Company	Woodbridge
Olde Burnside Brewing Company	East Hartford
Cavalry Brewing Company	Oxford
Cottrell Brewing Company	Pawcatuck
City Steam Brewer and Café	Hartford
Thomas Hooker Brewing	Bloomfield
Cambridge Brew House	Granby
Southport Brewing Company	Stamford, Southport, Milford, Hamden, Branford
Brewpub at Mohegan Sun	Uncasville

Weblinks to other State Beer Trails

<http://www.iloveny.com/brewerytrails/mapoftrails.html>

<http://brewersvt.com/passport>

<http://www.mainebrewersguild.org/BeerTrailWeb.pdf>